

Health Agency Leaders Highlight Progress at Employee Forum

By Michael Wilson



L.A. County Health Agency leaders and labor partners held a virtual town hall meeting on August 31 to share milestones in integrating services provided by the Departments of Health Services, Mental Health (DMH) and Public Health (DPH), saying strong labor-management partnerships are the building blocks. Nearly 1,400 employees tuned in at over 200 streamed sites. From diversion of mentally ill inmates out of county jails, to creation of supportive housing for the chronically homeless, to managing public health crises in the communities of Porter Ranch and Vernon, participants heard from a variety of frontline voices expressing optimism in the work ahead to deliver coordinated services at the point of need. "This partnership challenges us to trust one another, but our shared vision as well," said SEIU 721 president Bob Schoonover. "Working together is where fundamental trust is being built. Building trust requires us to come to the table with feet firm on where we are and minds open to what we will create together." Health Agency director Mitchell

Katz, MD, said the agency was formed without a separate staff or budget to not create new bureaucracy. Instead, leaders would focus on how the three departments could do "great things together for the same person at the same time to have maximal impact." He envisioned outreach teams in Skid Row with staff from the three departments working together to address a client's medical, substance abuse and behavioral health needs. Following a video presentation on response to the Exide Battery health crisis in Vernon, DPH interim health officer Jeffrey Gunzenhauser, MD, highlighted the use of DMH promotoras and DHS clinical services working alongside DPH nurses as examples of the type of collaborations that would solve problems and meet community needs. Maribel Castillo, RN, a public health nurse in the Child Health and Disability Prevention program, recalled case-managing families in communities surrounding Vernon that were affected by decades of toxic emissions from the battery recycling plant. She canvassed

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A Message From the Director

Working Together for a Healthier L.A.



Mitch Katz, MD

The promise of the Health Agency is that by working together we accomplish things that would otherwise be impossible. This theme of "togetherness" was well exhibited at the Town Hall (see story to the right). The Agency brings together the three major health departments in the county: health services, mental health and public health. But the town hall also gave us a chance to bring together our organized labor partners including SEIU, AFSCME, UAPD, CIR, and the Teamsters. One of central tenets of the Health Agency is that the core goals of the departments and organized labor are the same: A successful public sector that keeps county constituents healthy and is an employer of choice as well. Another aspect of the "togetherness" was that the town hall was broadcast to approximately 220 different sites throughout the county. I am very pleased that we are able to use technology to solve the problem of how do you communicate across the large land mass we know as Los Angeles County.

Best wishes.

Project Management Experts Share Insights

By Lee Wong

If you've ever wondered what project managers do or how to become one, consider coming to one of the quarterly meetings hosted by the DHS Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) in partnership with the Project Management Institute - Los Angeles Chapter (PMI-LA). These Downtown LA Project Management events are held in the Health Services Administration Building auditorium. Featured speakers share their experiences, hints, and tips as project management professionals. All events are free to the general public including those who are not yet certified and interested in project management. Our partnership with PMI-LA allows certified project management professionals to earn two professional development units (PDU's) as part of their continuing education requirements. Our August 4 event featured Sean Barrett of I20VC, a Project Portfolio Management Consultancy company that provides consulting and training services for clients with project management needs. The presentation topic was "Warming the Forming-Storming-Norming Cycle." The Forming-Storming-Norming concept

was created in 1965 by psychologist Dr. Bruce Tuckman. In his paper, "Tuckman's Stages of Group Development," Dr. Tuckman used this theory in group dynamics to describe the path that most teams follow from their formation towards the path and goal of high performance and achievement. Sean drew the parallels between the Forming-Storming-Norming concept and the experiences and challenges faced by project teams in today's environment.

Our next event will be held from 7:30 am – 10:00 am on Thursday, November 3. Our featured speaker will be Rachel Bullock, Chief Operating Officer of Render Media, Inc. Rachel will be speaking on the topic "Growing Leaders through Project Management." This presentation will detail how project management disciplines such as communication, planning, negotiation, problem



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Safety Culture Assessed in New Survey

By Marife Mendoza

The DHS Patient Safety Committee will conduct an [online Patient Safety Culture Survey](#) for employees in all facilities from **October 1 to November 15**. The survey will help us understand our strengths and weaknesses in providing safe care to patients. In order to improve our work in patient safety, executive and facility leaders need to hear your voice, so please speak up and be heard – everyone’s voice matters! There are two different survey types – one for inpatient hospital settings and one for outpatient settings. Each one is available in English and Spanish. The Hospital survey tool is applicable to workforce members in the inpatient setting, while

the clinic survey tool is applicable for workforce members in the outpatient setting. If you work in both (inpatient and outpatient) settings, you only need to complete ONE survey tool that represents 50% or more of your scheduled work hours. The survey ensures complete anonymity for responders by using the Survey Monkey platform. Complete the survey to be entered into a weekly gift drawing. Compiled results will be shared with all workforce members. For any questions, contact your facility patient safety officer or email patientsafety@dhs.lacounty.gov.

MLK Outpatient Center Opens Adult Sickle Cell Disease Clinic

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is personal for many residents of South Los Angeles. Nearly half of the State’s 3,000 individuals with SCD reside in Los Angeles County, with many of them in the communities surrounding the MLK campus.

SCD is a genetic disease affecting the red blood cells. It is most common in African-American communities but is also found in individuals of Hispanic, South Asian, and Middle Eastern descent. The abnormally shaped blood cells create clumps and block blood flow in small arteries. This results in intermittent and unpredictable pain crises, organ dysfunction, and anemia. The life expectancy is diminished, and the most severely affected can die in early adulthood.

However, new therapeutic developments and highly coordinated care have transformed a disease that historically had limited survivorship out of childhood into a chronic condition that can be managed well into adulthood. While there are robust programs for children, access to similar coordinated care for adults has been limited. When alerted to the local need for comprehensive care for adults with SCD, MLK OPC leaders decided to tackle the problem head on. Partners at the National Sickle Cell Disease Foundation of California, the Center for Inherited Blood Disorders, and UCLA supported development of a comprehensive



Hematologist Susan Claster talks with “patient” Lance Jones during a mock clinic run on July 29.

program of care. There has been no Sickle Cell Clinic at MLK since former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher’s SCD research center at the King/Drew Medical Center closed decades ago. The Sickle Cell Clinic at MLK OPC is part of an Advanced Practice Medical Home initiative that offers a unique perspective on complex medical care. Drawing from the lessons learned in primary care, the Sickle Cell Clinic offers an integrated approach with a focus on primary care. A primary care Nurse Practitioner serves as the foundation of the team. Dr. Susan Claster, a hematologist specializing in the care of adults with SCD has joined MLK OPC to provide specialty support for the clinic. The clinic services also include integrated behavioral health and peer navigators. The Medical Home is beginning to offer alternative therapies for pain management, which includes a regular weekly yoga class for patients who are interested. Plans are underway to expand the integrated alternative therapies offered as the year goes on. “Adults with sickle cell dis-

ease deserve health care providers that understand the disease, its complications, and their pain,” says Mary Brown, President and CEO of the Sickle Cell Disease Foundation of California, the lead community based organization in the Collaborative. “Knowing the MLK staff are planning and providing the services gives me great confidence they will meet the community’s needs.” For more information, contact Dr. Ellen Rothman, erothman@dhs.lacounty.gov.

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neighborhoods and marshaled resources to get residents tested for lead exposure. “This crisis is personal to me because I was born and raised in East L.A.” She said the short term strategy of pulling together state and local resources was critical, but a long term plan of analyzing long-term public health impacts and “doing right” by the low-income Latino families by providing medical and mental health services in those areas was just as important. Castillo urged co-workers to take a bigger role in Health Agency efforts. “I chose to be part of the solution and stepped forward as part of the integrated taskforce and reestablish a culture of partnership.” Panelists said Health Agency priorities would come



from identifying gaps in services and unmet needs, and identifying new approaches to old problems. Expansion of supportive housing, sobering centers and community mental health settings combined with greater use of community health workers would be among strategies to improve health outcomes. DMH acting director Robin Kay, Ph.D., said the departments should continue to cross-train and learn from each other under the Agency structure. Kay and UAPD president Stuart Bussey, MD, cited the expansion of the eConsult referral platform connecting providers together as another significant step to bringing the three departments together under one Health Agency. To view the town hall session [click here](#).

Cyber Security Threats on the Rise

By Rafael Noblé



We live in a world that is more connected than ever before. The growing number of attacks on America’s cyber networks has become, in President Obama’s words, “one of the most serious economic and national security threats our nation faces.” Healthcare tops the list of the most cyber-attacked industries with a staggering 100 million healthcare records breached last year. Cyber criminals consider healthcare records the gold standard for cyber theft. DHS has tracked an increase of phishing, malware and ransomware attacks in recent months and it’s going to get worse before it gets better. In light of these threats, DHS has partnered with the Departments of Public Health and Mental Health to develop an October awareness program with experts in the field of cybersecurity. National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM) is a campaign to raise awareness about cybersecurity and engage and educate on the topic. DHS was one of the first members of the L.A. County family to partner with the Department of Homeland Security’s “Stop.Think.Connect.” campaign and has sponsored a NCSAM program for several years. Mark your calendars to attend these upcoming events:

Wednesday, October 26 (11:00 -12:00PM): Deron McElroy, Director of Regional Partnerships for the Office of Cybersecurity and Communications, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Location: Health Services Administration Auditorium, 313 N. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles.

Wednesday, October 26 (1:00 - 4:15PM): Deron McElroy, Director of Regional Partnerships for the DHS Office of Cybersecurity and Communications, Department of U.S. Homeland Security, and Anthony Cabrera, Information Security Officer at the Community Development Commission. Location: Ferguson Auditorium, 5555 Ferguson Drive, Commerce.

Thursday, October 27 (8:00 - 9:00AM and 9:30 - 10:30AM): Jason Smolanoff, former FBI Agent and CEO of CISO Advisory Investigations. Location: Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Assembly Room, 1000 W. Carson Street, Torrance.

All events are free and pre-registration is not required. For more information, contact one of the Information Security Officers below:

- Health Services Administration:** Rafael J. Noblé – (213) 240-8299
- Public Health:** Richard Greenberg – (323) 869-8120
- Harbor-UCLA Medical Center:** Luis Valentin - (310) 222-2181

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solving, etc. can be applied as leadership development training for professionals in all disciplines. Please look for more information and registration details for this event on the PMI-LA Chapter website (pmi-la.org) or on the DHS intranet site (myladhs.lacounty.gov).